

Building and Sustaining Partnerships



Solid working relationships with our partners are critical to the DNR developing and attaining its natural resources goals. The Wildlife Division continues to work with many state and federal agencies, universities, sporting and conservation organizations, and the public to maximize wildlife conservation efforts.

Michigan Natural Features Inventory

The Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI, part of Michigan State University's Extension program) is one of the Wildlife Division's long-standing partners. MNFI plays a critical role, assisting in the identification, management and protection of Michigan's rarest natural resources. In FY 2010, this partnership saw the completion of 30,000 acres of vegetation inventory on state game areas, continued support of the habitat conservation planning effort for the endangered Mitchell's Satyr butterfly, habitat inventory and field surveys in support of the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP), and implementation of the Invasive Plant Framework for Action. In addition, the MNFI maintains the state's knowledge base on threatened and endangered species, which is critical to the protection of these rare resources.

Partnership for Ecosystem Research and Management

The Wildlife Division continued to collaborate with the Partnership for Ecosystem Research and Management (PERM) at Michigan State University, seeking to increase their joint capacity in wildlife genetics, communications, evaluation of conservation models, strategic planning, and integrating partners and the public into the decision-making process.

Memoranda of Understanding

Successful partnering at this level requires clear, written agreements that outline the framework and opportunities to assist with mutually agreed-upon wildlife management projects and activities. In FY 2010, the Wildlife Division entered into Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with several conservation-minded groups, including:

- Agreements with the Quality Deer Management Association, the Saginaw Field and Stream Club, the United Sportsmen's Alliance, the Michigan Hunters Alliance and the Michigan Building & Construction Trades Council to assist the Wildlife Division with wildlife management activities on public lands;
- An agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Ohio Division of Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited and the Black Swamp Conservancy to acquire conservation easements on lands surrounding state wildlife management areas and federal refuges;
- An agreement with the Mackinac Bridge Authority to facilitate operation of a deer check station at the bridge;
- An agreement with the Wildlife Management Institute to provide funding for early successional and young forest development; and
- A 25-year agreement with Ducks Unlimited to protect, restore and enhance wetland habitat in the Southeastern Lake Michigan Coastal Zone in southwestern Michigan as part of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

Ducks Unlimited

Long-time partner Ducks Unlimited (DU) teamed up with the Wildlife Division on five federal Environmental Protection Agency grants (totaling nearly \$1.8 million) through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. The money will be used on wetland restorations at Erie State Game Area and Fish Point State Wildlife Area; a wetland enhancement at Pointe Aux Peaux State Wildlife Area; a pump station replacement at Nayanquing Point State Wildlife Area; and invasive phragmites control in the Lake St. Clair area. The Wildlife Division also began work with DU biologists and engineers on restoration projects at Maple River State Game Area, Sturgeon River Sloughs State Wildlife Area and Crow Island State Game Area.

Hunting Organizations

Many of the Wildlife Division's relationships with conservation organizations are long-standing and continue to bear fruit:

- The Michigan Involvement Committee (MIC) of Safari Club International is a long-time Wildlife Division partner, supporting both research and management projects. In addition to supporting the division's moose-reintroduction efforts in the mid-1980s, the organization has supplied over \$700,000 to Wildlife Division programs since 1991. This past year MIC made significant contributions to the division's research program, supporting the predator-prey study, wolf management and the southern Michigan bear study.
- The partnership with the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) has endured for decades and spans wide territory, from the MUCC's help in developing the state's first comprehensive deer management plan to its backing of the pheasant restoration initiative.
- The Wildlife Division's Waterfowl Work Group continued to hold two meetings annually with the Citizens Waterfowl Advisory Committee to get input on waterfowl hunting seasons and management priorities.
- Additionally, the Wildlife Division continued to partner with Pheasants Forever on food and cover plantings on both state and private lands; with the Ruffed Grouse Society, which participates in habitat planning activities and maintains a piece of heavy equipment that is used to revitalize early successional habitat on both state and private land; and with the National Wild Turkey Federation, which assists in habitat improvements and helps to run and promote the annual turkey patch competition.
- Several local groups – including the Shiawassee Flats Citizens and Hunters Association, the Harsens Island Waterfowlers Association and the St. Clair Flats Waterfowlers, Inc. – donate both money and sweat equity toward improving state game and wildlife management areas.

Furbearer Organizations

The Wildlife Division enlisted members of the Michigan Trapper and Predator Caller Association, Mid-Michigan Independent Trappers and Great Lakes Fur Harvesters to help at a trapping and predator-calling workshop for division staff at the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center. Members of these organizations shared expertise they have gained through years of experience in the field and at conventions. The training provided Wildlife Division staff with a better understanding of trapping and predator-calling techniques, trapping etiquette, fur handling and public relations.



Hunting and trapping organizations are among the DNR's key partners in wildlife conservation

These groups, along with the Upper Peninsula Trappers Association, continued working for Wildlife Division on the Michigan Trapper Education program, now in its second year. The organizations present trapper education courses using a curriculum developed mutually with the DNR.

Pheasant Restoration Initiative

Joining with Pheasants Forever, MUCC, state and federal departments of agriculture, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Wildlife Division is working to revitalize Michigan's pheasant-hunting heritage. The Pheasant Restoration Initiative asks the public's help to establish tracts of at least 10,000 acres in blocks that include both private and public lands where existing habitat can be improved, habitat deficiencies can be corrected, and, if needed, existing pheasant stocks can be supplemented with wild birds from out of state. Three-county pilot areas were identified: Huron, Sanilac and Tuscola counties; Hillsdale, Lenawee and Monroe counties; and Gratiot, Saginaw and Clinton counties. To follow the latest developments, visit www.michigan.gov/pheasant.

Woodcock and Young Forest Initiative

Michigan joined Wisconsin and Minnesota, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Wildlife Management Institute, and other agencies and organizations in the Upper Great Lakes Woodcock and Young Forest Initiative, which is part of the North American Woodcock Conservation Plan. The plan identifies woodcock as a species of greatest conservation need, aims to reverse woodcock population declines, and establishes goals for the development and restoration of early successional forest habitat to invigorate woodcock populations continent-wide.



Pictured from left to right: pheasant; woodcock; red fox